

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15 DLOS-09  
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4388  
INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0806

STATE FOR ARA/ECA

USIA FOR ILA

E.O. 11652 GDS  
TAGS SHUM, SOPN, AR  
SUBJECT PRESS RESTRICTIONS

SUMMARY: DURING JANUARY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SEIZED OR  
SUSPENDED FIVE PUBLICATIONS, TWO OF WHICH ARE LINKED TO  
JUNTA MEMBER ADMIRAL MASSERA. AN INTERIOR MINISTRY  
SOURCE ATTRIBUTED THE INCREASED NUMBER OF CRACKDOWNS ON  
THE MEDIA TO THE ARGENTINE CHILEAN DISPUTE OVER THE  
BEAGLE CHANNEL ISLANDS. BECAUSE OF THE BEAGLE DISPUTE,  
HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT IS ESPECIALLY SENSITVIE TO PRESS  
COMMENTARY THAT COULD UNDERMINE MILITARY OR NATIONAL  
UNITY. END SUMMARY.

1. BUENOS AIRES HERALD EDITORIAL "THE PRESS IN LIMBO"  
JANUARY 31 PROTESTS RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON FIVE PUBLICATIONS  
IN JANUARY. THE PAPER SAID: "THE WAY THINGS ARE DEVELOPING,  
1978 IS NOT GOING TO BE A BANNER YEAR FOR THE ARGENTINE  
PRESS. ALREADY FIVE PUBLICATIONS HAVE BEEN MUZZLED  
BY THE GOVERNMENT. ELEMENTOS, LA TRIBUNA DE LA  
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REPUBLICA, PRENSA ARGENTINA, MAD, AND CREER. ALL  
ALLEGEDLY SOUGHT TO DISTURB SOCIAL HARMONY IN SOME  
WAY. THE COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION ELEMENTOS WAS  
ACCUSED, PLAUSIBLY, OF PROPAGATING 'DISSOCIATIVE'  
MARXIST DOCTRINE. LA TRIBUNA DE LA REPUBLICA, A  
PERONIST TRACT, WAS APPARENTLY ENCOURAGING A CLIMATE  
OF SOCIAL AGITATION. CREER, A MAGAZINE WHOSE EDITORIAL

LINE HAS USUALLY BEEN DEMOCRATIC, CONSTRUCTIVE, AND RESPONSIBLE, WAS CHARGED WITH SPREADING FALSE RUMOURS AIMED AT "HARMING THE IMAGE OF UNITY AND DISCIPLINE OF INSTITUTIONS FUNDAMENTAL FOR THE SECURITY OF THE NATION"

2. INTERIOR MINISTRY PRESS SECRETARY TOLD INFORMATION OFFICER THAT CRACKDOWNS ON PUBLICATIONS IN JANUARY WERE CAUSED BY GOA SENSITIVITY TO BEAGLE SITUATION. HE SAID ADMIRAL MASSERA ORDERED THE SUPPRESSION OF AN ISSUE OF CREER, AN ECONOMIC MAGAZINE. CREER PUBLISHED A REPORT THAT 45 NAVAL OFFICERS HAD SIGNED A PETITION CALLING FOR THE CONTINUANCE ON ACTIVE DUTY OF MASSERA RIVAL ADMIRAL MENDIA, THE CHIEF OF THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION TO THE INTER AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD IN WASHINGTON. CREER EDITOR, BERNARDO NEUSTADT, TOLD THE IO THE MENDIA ITEM HAD BEEN INSERTED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE WHILE HE WAS ON VACATION.

3. THE PRESS SECRETARY SAID THAT ISSUES OF LA TRIVUNA DE LA REPUBLICA AND PRENSA ARGENTINA HAD BEEN BANNED FOR ATTACKS ON THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF MARTINEZ DE HOZ.

TRIBUNA, WIDELY REGARDED AS A MASSERA FINANCED NEWSPAPER, IS EDITED BY PERONIST JORGE NAPP, FORMER EDITOR OF THE PERONIST MAGAZINE LAS BASES. (IT HAS BEEN BANNED FOR 3 MONTHS). PRENSA ARGENTINA, APPARENTLY BANNED PERMANENTLY, IS VIEWED AS ANOTHER MASSERA BACKED PUBLICATION.  
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4. PRESS SECRETARY ALSO SAID THAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET HAD COMPLAINED TO PRESIDENT VIDELA ABOUT ARGENTINE PRESS TREATMENT OF CHILE AND ITS PRESIDENT. THE GOA HAD CONSEQUENTLY ORDERED THE PRESS TO GIVE PINOCHET BETTER TREATMENT DURING THE COURSE OF THE BEAGLE TALKS, HE SAID.

5. AN ISSUE OF THE ARGENTINE EDITION OF MAD WAS BANNED JANUARY 30 FOR AN ARTICLE JUDGED TO BE DISRESPECTFUL TO THE CHURCH. "MARXISM ASSUMES MANY DISGUISES", SAID THE PRESS SECRETARY.

6. ELEMENTOS, A COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION, WAS BANNED PERMANENTLY. IT IS EXPECTED TO REAPPEAR SOON UNDER THE NAME TELEX, PRINTED BY THE SAME PUBLISHING HOUSE (ALEMANN).

7. THE PRESS SECRETARY SAID THERE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO MANY BANNED PUBLICATIONS HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE DIFFICULTIES WITH CHILE. HE SAID HE WAS NOT ALWAYS FAMILIAR WITH THE REASONS FOR THE SUPPRESSIONS OF A GIVEN PUBLICATION EVEN THOUGH HIS MINISTRY ISSUES THE BANNING DECREES, BECAUSE "SOMETIMES THE COMMANDS COME FROM ABOVE".

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## Message Attributes

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